

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AVMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2945

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SEDU, PINT, DR

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT CONFIRMS NEW DIRECTIONS FOR EDUCATION

REF : SD 0925

1. IN HIS INDEPENDENCE DAY SPEECH BEFORE THE LEGISLATURE, PRESIDENT BALAGUER CONFIRMED THE NEW DIRECTIONS HE HAS PROPOSED FOR DR'S EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. DRAWING HEAVILY ON WORLD BANK STUDIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS, HE DECLARED THE GOVERNMENT'S GOALS TO BE EXPANSION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION, STRENGTHENING OF VOCATIONAL AND PRACTICAL TRAINING, AND EXPANSION AND IMPROVEMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION. GOVERNMENT WILL CONCENTRATE ITS EFFORTS OUTSIDE THE LARGEST URBAN CENTERS. TOTAL COST OF EXPANSION PROGRAM WILL BE ABOUT \$28 MILLION AND WILL BE FINANCED IN LARGE PART BY WORLD BANK.

2. PRESIDENT NOTED THAT THERE ARE 600,000 TO 700,000 CHILDREN OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL AGE AS COMPARED TO SOME 30,000 TO 40,000 UNIVERSITY STUDENTS. GOVERNMENT'S CONCENTRATION ON BRINGING BENEFITS TO RURAL AREAS WAS FORCED NOT ONLY BY CONSIDERATIONS FOR MAJORITY RULE BUT ALSO BY NEED TO OVERHAUL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF COUNTRY TO GIVE IT MORE RELEVANCE TO DR AND ITS NEEDS. PRESIDENT ALSO POINTED OUT THAT CONSTITUTION ITSELF MADE PRIMARY EDUCATION

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OBLIGATORY THROUGHOUT COUNTRY.

3. PRESIDENT'S REFERENCE TO 30,000 TO 40,000 UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WAS OBVIOUSLY INTENDED TO MEAN, PRIMARILY, AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF SANTO DOMINGO (UASD). PRESIDENT SAID THAT, "INSTEAD OF ENCOURAGING...PROFESSIONAL PARASITISM, CONSTITUTED BY THE ENORMOUS MASS OF DOCTORS OF ALL DISCIPLINES WHO ISSUE FORTH FROM OUR UNIVERSITIES WITH POMPOUS DIPLOMAS, WHICH UNFORTUANTELY DO NOT MAKE THEM CAPABLE, IN THE MAJORITY OF CASES, OF ANY PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITY." GODR WILL OFFER OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO PREPARE THEMSELVES FOR LIFE AND TO CONTRIBUTE TO DEVELOPMENT OF COUNTRY.

4. COMMENT: PRESIDENT'S SPEECH APPEARS TO SOUND DEATH KNELL FOR UASD HOPES FOR INCREASED GODR CONTRIBUTION TO BUDGET. UASD HAS INSISTED ON "OPEN ADMISSIONS" DESPITE GODR ADMONITIONS AND WITH ITS SWOLLEN ENROLMENT NOW FACES BUDGETARY DEFICITS WHICH ARE MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE TO PAY SOME OF THE BILLS. IMMEDIATE REACTION MAY BE THAT STUDENTS AND FACULTY WILL BECOME MORE AGGRESSIVE IN DEMANDS ON GOVERNMENT AND MAY ORGANIZE DEMONSTRATIONS OFF CAMPUS WHICH POLICE ARE PLEDGED TO SUPPRESS. IF GODR IS FIRM IN ITS NEW POLICY, ITS LONGER RANGE EFFECT MAY BE TO FORCE UASD TO LIMIT NUMBER OF ENTERING STUDENTS. ALTERNATIVE OF ENDING FULLY SUBSIDIZED EDUCATION WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO UASD.
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